



"Conserving Wildlife - Serving People"

Diamond Lake has fish once again

After 15 years, water levels in Diamond Lake, near Arlington (also known as Bosler Reservoir), have increased to a point where the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has stocked trout once again.

The reservoir was too low to support trout for more than a decade, but abundant water supplies and cooperation from the Wheatland Irrigation District made it possible to refill it enough to stock trout in it this year.

"Diamond Lake was an excellent fishery at one time and we hope it will be again," said Lee McDonald, fisheries biologist in Laramie. Fisheries managers stocked 16,000 catchable rainbow trout into the lake on June 22. These 6 to 7-inch fish should grow to 14 inches by fall 2016 and 17 inches by next spring. Over the succeeding weeks, fingerling brook and cutthroat trout were also stocked and should be catchable size by next summer.

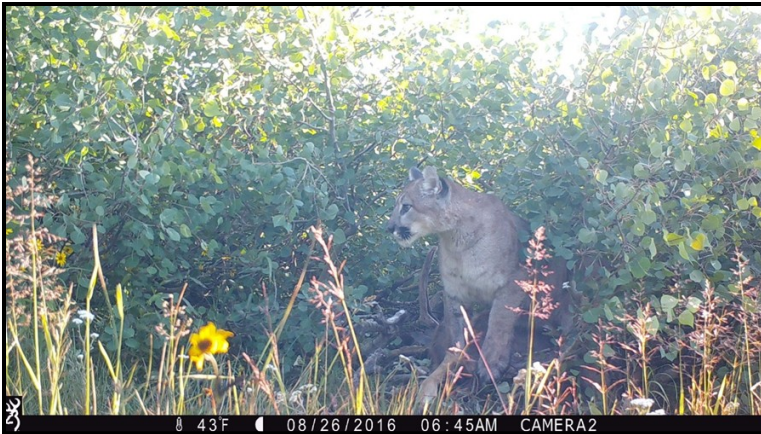
"This is a very productive lake, and since there haven't been any fish in here for a long time there will be plenty of available food for the fish we stock," McDonald said. The fishery should be re-established by 2017.

The land and water at Diamond Lake are owned by Wheatland Irrigation District, which recently entered into an agreement with the Game and Fish Department to provide water to the reservoir. The statewide regulation of six (6) fish daily limit with no size restrictions will apply for trout at Diamond Lake.



Laramie Fisheries Biologist Lee McDonald, above, tests the temperature and quality of the water in Diamond Lake before stocking rainbow trout to ensure the water will support the fish. In the photo below, heavy duty hoses are used to transport the fish from the truck into the lake.





Mountain lion near homes

Elk Mountain Game Warden Ryan Kenneda was contacted by a concerned resident at the Aspen Highlands community on the east side of Elk Mountain regarding a dead deer near his house.

Warden Kenneda investigated and found a buck mule deer tucked under some low rising aspen trees, with grass and dirt partially covering it. There were also large scratches along the neck and the hind quarters had been eaten. Kenneda set up a game camera to observe the lion and notified the Home Owner Association. The lion returned to feed on the carcass the next two days.

Osprey rescue

Wheatland Game Warden David Ellsworth responded to a report that an osprey had become entangled in baling twine it had used as part of its nesting material. The bird was dangling from the nest by its foot about 25 feet off the ground.

Warden Ellsworth called Wheatland REA and asked for assistance. He was met by linemen Austin Gesinger and Jeremiah Stegman. The men hoisted a truck bucket up to the nest, cut the twine and lowered the bird to the ground. Warden Ellsworth freed the bird's legs and also removed a fish hook and line that was tangled around its foot.

He released the osprey and watched as it immediately headed for the nearby North Platte River for a drink of water. Thank you to Wheatland REA for assisting in the rescue.



New check station at Springer WHMA

Pheasant hunters who are lucky enough to draw a permit for the Springer Special Pheasant Hunt this year will notice a new check station the morning of their hunt. The old trailer is being replaced with a larger, permanent structure. It will provide heat and electricity for the numerous employees who work the check station each year.

Banding ducks in Goshen County

Game and Fish personnel from around the state assisted with waterfowl banding at Springer and Table Mountain WHMAs in Goshen County.

This season was the first time in several years that the department has banded waterfowl in southeastern Wyoming. Capture efforts began during mid- August. Approximately 800 ducks have been banded and released, the majority being blue-winged teal, mallards, and wood ducks.

Banding is an important tool used to track migration patterns and survival of waterfowl species. Many hunters enjoy keeping bands from harvested ducks and are asked to report the information on the band.

In the photos at right, clockwise from the top, a wood duck receives a band; biologists bring a full trap to shore for processing; and a mallard is released after banding.



Snowy Range moose

Wyoming visitor Todd Thompson has spent several years living and working in South Africa and is used to seeing large animals such as elephants and rhinos. He was just as pleased to spot these two impressive bull moose grazing together along Highway 130 in the Snowy Range in mid-August. The Snowy Range boasts one of the most robust moose herds in Wyoming. Photos by Todd Thompson.



Kathy Dillmon (holding fish) and Julie Federer, both from Cheyenne Headquarters, helped sample brown trout at Crystal Reservoir in August as part of a job share program. Kathy is the Engineering Tech Manager and Julie is an Accounting Analyst. The Laramie Region is grateful to both ladies for their assistance.

Brown trout in Crystal & Granite reservoirs

Laramie Region fisheries managers surveyed Crystal and Granite reservoirs in August to estimate the brown trout population.

While these two reservoirs are mainly managed for catchable rainbows, with Game and Fish stocking 32,000 per year, brown trout are added to the mix to give anglers an opportunity to catch a unique species. About 5,000 brown trout are stocked in each reservoir as small fingerlings each year.

Fish managers have been stocking brown trout in Crystal and Granite for more than 10 years and they wanted to see how the populations are faring.

As predators, the brown trout feed mostly on the crayfish and perch found in the reservoirs. However, they grow slowly here due to the low productivity of both reservoirs. The water that fills these reservoirs is piped down the mountain, which causes it to lose a lot of dissolved solids (nutrients). Also, there is no natural reproduction of brown trout or rainbow trout in these reservoirs. All the fish that live here have been stocked.

To track the numbers and size of brown trout, biologists set several gill nets in both reservoirs in mid-August. Brown trout were found in both reservoirs in good numbers and sizes. The average fish was between 10-12 inches with a few around 16 inches. Interestingly, there was also a 31-inch brown trout caught in Granite Reservoir over the summer. There is a photo of the fish in the visitor's center at Curt Gowdy State Park.

While they are pleased with the results, fish biologists will analyze all the data over the winter to determine if they will continue to stock brown trout in both reservoirs in the future.





Aquatic habitat projects

Aquatic Habitat Biologist Christina Barrineau helped Trout Unlimited (TU) tackle the ever growing thistle problem on the Encampment River-Boykin Restoration. Canadian and musk thistle were sprayed throughout the 77 acre riparian pasture, focusing on areas closest to the stream channel. In the above photo at left, Fisheries Technician Betsy Morgan sprays thistle on the Encampment River-Boykin Restoration.

High flows over the past few years have triggered maintenance needs for the in-channel construction of the Encampment River-Boykin Restoration. During 2016 spring flows, a significant portion of bank was eroded on the downstream end which compromised the integrity of the downstream Peryam Restoration. TU contracted with North State Environmental and Michael Geenen to construct needed maintenance on the lower reach. Maintenance included rebuilding a rock constructed riffle structure, rebuilding toewood, and modifying width/depth ratios (center photo.)

Christina and Betsy conducted pre- and post-project monitoring of Encampment projects throughout August. Cross-sections were measured along with photopoints on the Peryam reach. Survival counts of willow cuttings and clumps were conducted on the Richardson reach, along with survival counts of mixed shrub and willow/cottonwood cutting plots on the Boykin reach. In the photo at right, Betsy Morgan, Mike Robertson and Sam Cox conduct photogrammetric monitoring on the Encampment River at the Cherokee/Wagoner project reach.

Fish sampling around the region



Fish biologists in the Laramie Region keep busy in the summer sampling fish populations.

In the Snowy Range, they sampled Lost Lake, Lookout Lake, Mill Pond Lake, Towner Lake, Round Lake, Telephone Lake, Dipper Lake, and Bellamy Lake. All of these lakes contain wild Brook Trout, except Dipper Lake which is stocked

annually with Arctic Grayling.

Dipper Lake continues to produce some exceptional Grayling over 16 inches, while the other lakes have a typical abundant population of 8-12 inch Brook Trout. There is still some time before the snow flies to enjoy the Snowy Range lakes!

Fisheries biologist also used backpack electro-fishing equipment to sample the trout population at the Big Creek Public Access Area near Riverside. Biologists report good brown trout numbers with some nice 19-inch fish and plenty of younger fish. Big Creek is sampled every three years and the brown trout population is up a bit from the last survey in 2013. Photos by Steve Gale and Lee McDonald.





Picking up fawn results in citation

Elk Mountain Game Warden Ryan Kenneda received a tip about an individual who had picked up a pronghorn fawn off the side of the road.

Warden Kenneda followed up on the tip and learned that a woman from the eastern part of the country had recently moved to Wyoming and observed the fawn on the side of the road near Rock River. She said she stopped her vehicle and the fawn ran up to her, so she picked it up and put it in her vehicle to take it home. She said there was no evidence that an adult had been hit by a vehicle near the fawn.

By the time Kenneda arrived at the woman's residence, she was in the process of building a small outdoor enclosure for the fawn. She had been keeping it in a kennel in her house and the fawn appeared to be in good health.

The woman told Warden Kenneda that she was a certified vet technician in her former state and had rehabilitated wildlife when she lived there. She had kept detailed notes on the fawn's food intake, temperature and vitamins it had consumed.

Because it is illegal to possess live big game animals in Wyoming, the fawn was confiscated and delivered to the Sybille research facility. It was later transported to Colorado for a research project. The woman was issued a citation and after a failure to appear in court, she paid the citation.

Wyoming residents are reminded that they should never pick up injured or orphaned big game animals and instead report them to the Game and Fish Department.



Rabbits darted with blow-guns

In two separate incidents, people were shooting cottontail rabbits with a blow-gun in Rock River and Laramie. In the Rock River incident, Game Warden Jordan Winter received a report on young individuals walking around the town of Rock River with a blow-gun shooting cottontails.

With assistance from the reporting party, Warden Winter found a lone cottontail still alive with a dart in its hind leg (photo at right). Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd assisted Warden Winter in removing the dart from the rabbit. The wardens then spoke with the individuals and resolved the case.

In Laramie, Warden Jason Sherwood opened an investigation into a cottontail rabbit that was apparently shot in Laramie by someone using a blow-gun. At this time no suspects have been identified. In both cases, the small game season had not yet opened.

The Game and Fish Department reminds sportsmen that while it is not illegal to hunt small game with a blow gun, it may not be an ethical decision to do so. Photos by Jordan Winter and Jason Sherwood.



Spotted skunk in Laramie garage

Laramie Wildlife Biologist Lee Knox set a trap for a skunk in a homeowner's garage and was amazed to catch a spotted skunk instead of the common striped skunk.

Spotted skunks are not normally seen around human populations and Knox said the young female was most likely searching for a home.

The Game and Fish Department and the University of Wyoming are initiating a survey of spotted skunks statewide. To help optimize the search, Game and Fish is requesting the public's help. Please report spotted skunk sightings to the Game and Fish's Nongame Program at (307) 332-2688, WGF-RareAnimal@wyo.gov, or online at wgfd.wyo.gov.

Spotted skunks are smaller than the common striped skunk and are about the size of a red squirrel. The spotted skunk gets its name from the combination of horizontal stripes on its neck and shoulders and the irregular, vertical stripes and elongated spots on the rest of its body. Spotted skunks have a white-tipped tail, prefer rugged country and are good tree climbers.

Habitat assessments

Elk Mountain Game Warden Ryan Kenneda, Terrestrial Habitat Biologist Ryan Amundson and Laramie Wildlife Biologist Lee Knox conducted rapid habitat surveys in the Elk Mountain district and on the Wick Wildlife Habitat Management Area.

A notice was sent out to the public for participation and although attendance was low, the individuals who did attend said they learned and appreciated what the Game and Fish Department does for wildlife.

It was observed that the berry load was mixed. In some locations, the berries were plentiful with choke cherries and raspberries and in other places there were very few or no signs of berries.

They also observed an aspen tree that had scarring from a black bear that climbed the tree. Bears climb trees to escape danger, to eat nuts or fruit located on a tree, or to rest or sleep. Photo by Ryan Kenneda.



Burrowing owl

Laramie Wildlife Biologist Lee Knox spotted this burrowing owl while conducting antelope classifications.

Burrowing Owls are small, tan colored owls with bright yellow eyes. They live underground in burrows they've dug themselves or taken over from a prairie dog, ground squirrel or other burrowing animal. They live in grasslands, deserts and other open habitats, where they hunt for insects and rodents.





Information Specialist Robin Kepple assisted the Cheyenne Veterans Affairs Medical Center Police Service with a "Cops and Bobbers" program that involved taking veterans fishing.

OUTREACH



Laramie Region Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood took a turn manning a booth at the State Fair in Douglas. Sherwood received a few leads on properties to potentially add acreage to the access program and answered numerous questions about various aspects of the department and wildlife in the state.

Hunter education

Torrington Game Warden Rob Hipp taught Hunter Education in Torrington and Information Specialist Robin Kepple held classes in Elk Mountain and Saratoga, with help from Game Wardens Ryan Kenneda and Biff Burton. Information about upcoming hunter education classes can be found online at wgfd.wyo.gov/education.



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